

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Currently amended): An apparatus comprising:

a shaft having open proximal and distal ends defining a lumen therethrough;
an inflatable bladder disposed at the distal end of the shaft and in fluid communication with the lumen, the inflatable bladder upon inflation having a ~~non-uniform~~ conical shape ~~selected from the group consisting of: eccentric, conical, and wedge-shaped~~; and

a cannula having an opening at a proximal end portion, an opening at a distal end portion, and defining a passage therethrough, the shaft and the inflatable bladder being at least partially disposed within the passage prior to inflation and axially movable therethrough, at least a portion of the inflatable bladder being disposed externally of the passage and adjacent tissue following the inflation thereof such that subsequent axial movement of the shaft causes the dissection of adjacent layers of tissue and creates ~~defines~~ a working space between the adjacent layers of tissue.

Claim 16 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder does not substantially stretch when fully inflated.

Claim 17 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at pressures from about 10 mmHg to about 1000 mmHg.

Claim 18 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at inflation pressures from about 100 mmHg to about 1000 mmHg.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the shaft is rigid.

Claim 20 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the shaft is flexible.

Claims 21-30 (Canceled).

Claim 31 (New): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflated inflatable bladder defines a recessed portion at a distal end thereof that is configured for receiving tissue during axial movement of the shaft.

Claim 32 (New): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder is configured to support the adjacent layers of tissue upon inflation.

Claim 33 (New): An apparatus comprising:

- a shaft having open proximal and distal ends and defining a lumen therethrough;
- a bladder disposed at the distal end of the shaft, the bladder having a conical

configuration upon inflation that defines a recessed distal portion; and

a cannula having a passage therethrough that is configured to receive the shaft and the bladder such that the bladder is axially movable with respect to the cannula, the bladder being at least partially disposed within the passage prior to inflation and at least partially disposed externally of the passage subsequent to inflation, whereby axial movement of the shaft causes the bladder to dissect adjacent layers of tissue and define a working space therebetween, wherein tissue received in the recessed distal portion is separated from surrounding tissue.